Specific Nouns

Specific nouns are especially helpful when you are trying to create a clear image or word picture for a reader. Notice the difference between the two example sentences below. The first sentence contains general nouns, and it doesn't express a very clear idea. The second sentence, which includes more specific nouns, does express a clear idea. (See page 531 in *Texas Write Source* for more information.)

The scientist wanted to study animals in another country. (general nouns)

Jane Goodall wanted to study chimpanzees in Tanzania. (specific nouns)

Look at the examples below. Notice that the nouns move from very general at the top to very specific at the bottom. By using a good number of specific nouns in your writing, you will make it easier for the reader to understand exactly what you are saying.

Examples

person	place	thing	idea
man	building	book	pain
artist	arena	reference book	headache
Vincent van Gogh	Madison Square Garden	Farmers' Almanac	migraine

Directions Now think of three nouns for each of the categories below. Each noun you add must be more specific than the one before it, as in the examples above.

person	place	thing	idea

Directions Revise each of the following sentences twice. Make sentence B even more specific than sentence A. (Add or change other words as necessary to create a better sentence.)

Example

The car drove past the building.

a. *The foreign car drove past the government building.*

b. *The Toyota convertible drove past the White House.*

1. The **animal** is in the **building.**

   a. _____

   b. _____

2. The **doctor** performed the **operation.**

   a. _____

   b. _____

3. The **singer** was given an **award.**

   a. _____

   b. _____

4. A **relative** came down with an **illness.**

   a. _____

   b. _____

5. The **dog** ran around the **tree.**

   a. _____

   b. _____